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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 002865

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF/SPG, AND AF/RSA
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [SU](#) [UN](#)
SUBJECT: SE NATSIOS' VISIT TO MALAKAL

REF: A. KHARTOUM 02765

[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 02772
[1](#)C. KHARTOUM 02804

Classified By: CDA Cameron Hume, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Two weeks after violence erupted between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) in the Upper Nile capital of Malakal, SE Natsios visited the area on December 11 to highlight the first serious breach in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). UN officials, the National Congress Party (NCP) governor, and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) deputy governor underscored the UN Mission in Sudan's (UNMIS) effectiveness in stabilizing the situation and cautioned that continued interference from Khartoum was undermining efforts to ensure security and to implement the CPA. Reports of the number of victims from the recent violence still vary, ranging from 150 to 285 deaths and up to several hundred injuries.

Wake-up Call

[1](#)2. (C) "This was a wake-up call for the fault lines of the CPA in the South," said UN Development Program Official Meredith Preston (please protect). Preston added that there was a "residual level of insecurity" in the area and said that the NCP's actions in the next month, particularly with regard to the militias, would test their commitment to the CPA. She noted that the rhetoric from the pro-NCP press in Khartoum following the attack was unhelpful because the reports of massacres of internally-displaced persons (IDPs) had deterred many from returning to the area, which would lessen the accuracy of the pre-election census. Preston warned that the confluence of oil resources and large troop concentrations in the region made it particularly volatile and claimed that SPLA officials had told her privately that they needed to "finish the conflict soon, violently if necessary." She called for international pressure on the Ministry of Energy and Mining and the Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC) to facilitate agreement on wealth sharing issues because many companies were "operating with impunity."

UNMIS Essential, NCP Undermining Peace

[1](#)3. (C) Governor Dak Bishob, a southerner with membership in the NCP, called UNMIS' role in stemming the conflict "essential" and noted that peace would not be sustainable without it. He admitted that the problems were exacerbated by his "partners" in Khartoum and emphasized the importance

of high-level dialogue to prevent future conflagrations. He said that he had ordered militia leader Gabriel Tang, one of the instigators of the recent violence, to Khartoum to lower tensions. Bishob claimed that he had asked Minister of Defense Abdul Rahim Mohammed Hussein during his recent visit to Malakal to remove all the un-integrated militia units to the north immediately and said the process had begun. UNMIS' Head of Office in Malakal, Peter Maxwell, praised Bishob for his efforts during the incident and said that though he was a "largely maligned figure, he had risen above during the recent crisis." Maxwell said that despite Bishob's insistence that Tang be moved to Khartoum he had received a "hero's welcome" upon arrival and that the SAF had sponsored a press conference for him.

14. (C) Deputy Governor Dock Jok Dock, an SPLM member, also lauded UNMIS for its rapid response in bringing order following the outbreak of violence. He said that the Sudanese government was orchestrating the breakdown of security in Malakal in order to prevent elections from being held in 2008 and to "pre-empt independence." Dock concurred with the UN's assessment that the violence had discouraged IDPs from returning and had undermined support for the CPA among the population. He said that NCP, at the instruction of National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) Chief Salah Ghosh, was including militia elements instead of the SAF into the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs) in a further effort to destabilize the peace process.

The Way Ahead

15. (C) Outlining the way ahead, UNMIS Force Commander Shekhawatt described the decisions taken by the Cease-fire

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Commission in the wake of the violence. These included the following: 1) Appointment of a commission to investigate the causes of the conflict, 2) Integration of the other armed groups (OAGs) into the SAF within one month, 3) Joint SAF-SPLM patrols during the day with SAF patrols north of the city and SPLM patrols south of the city at night, 4) Rotations of fresh SAF and SPLA troops into the JIUs, and 5) Unhindered water transportation and commerce along the Nile. Shekhawatt recommended that the issue of OAGs be addressed at the "highest levels" by the NCP, the SPLM, and the international community. He also pressed for the removal of the JIUs outside the town limits and their consolidation under one commander.

HUME